

NUTRITION SERVICES DIVISION MANAGEMENT BULLETIN

No. 02-121

TO:	All School Nutrition Program Sponsors	ISSUE DATE: September 2002
ATTENTION:	Food Service Director	
SUBJECT:	Purchase of Locally-Produced Foods	
REFERENCE:	United States Department of Agriculture SP Policy Memo 02-18	

This Management Bulletin provides information from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) on purchases of locally-produced foods for the school nutrition programs. In the summer of 1997, USDA began a comprehensive effort to connect small farms to school meal programs. This effort, known as the "farm to school" initiative, encourages small farmers to sell fresh fruits and vegetables to schools and encourages schools to buy this wholesome produce from small farmers.

In support of the farm to school initiative, the California Department of Education, Nutrition Services Division, encourages National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program sponsors to purchase locally-produced foods to the maximum extent feasible. With the abundance of fruits, vegetables, and nuts available in California, we encourage schools to include them in the meals served to children. Studies by the USDA, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the National Academy of Sciences validate the health benefits of fruits and vegetables.

A copy of "Small Farms/School Meals Initiative," a step-by-step guide on how to bring small farms and local schools together, is available at the following website:

www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/lunch/smallfarms/small.pdf

For more information on locally-produced foods, you may contact the Federation of Certified Farmers' markets at (916) 688-0100 or at the following website:

<http://farmersmarket.ucdavis.edu>

As a reminder, purchases of locally-grown fruits and vegetables must be competitively procured consistent with federal and state procurement laws and regulations. The purchase of fruits and vegetables may qualify as a small purchase under procurement requirements. A small purchase is defined in Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations 3016.36(d)(1). It is the relatively informal procedure used to purchase food, supplies, and services that do not exceed the applicable state or federal procurement threshold. For the 2002 calendar year, the procurement threshold for public schools is \$58,900. For private nonprofit agencies, the threshold is \$100,000; for local government agencies, the procurement threshold is determined at the local level. When using small purchase procedures, sponsors must obtain a minimum of three price quotes before

making a selection. There is no requirement to base the selection on the lowest price for these small purchases; however, sponsors must maintain records to document the rationale for the procurement method, contract type, contractor selection or rejection, and cost. For more information on procurement requirements, please contact Rae Dalimonte at (916) 445-6775 or rdalimon@cde.ca.gov.

If you have any questions, please contact your nutrition services representative, the Field Services Unit at (916) 445-0850 or (800) 952-5609, or Deborah Beall at (916) 324-8790 or dbeall@cde.ca.gov.

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